

Catherine Finnegan

Since graduating college, I have been focused on gaining professional experience in legal areas while completing my FE1 exams. I now have the experience, the legal skills and the academic record to add a high degree of value to a trainee programme. I am highly driven towards my goal of being a solicitor. I have completed all 8 FE1 exams through independent self-directed study, while in full-time employment. I achieved an average grade of 60% and passed all exams on first sitting. I was previously the manager of the administrative team in a busy in-house Legal team, with a unique level of exposure to pensions law, public and administrative law and procurement law due to my legal background. I am now temporarily in Australia where I am expanding my legal skills with the Law Society of New South Wales and gaining some life experience to optimise my commitment to the next stage of my trainee journey.

Career History

Trust Accounts Administration Officer – The Law Society of New South Wales *May 2024 – Present*

- Project lead for overhaul of multi-jurisdictional accreditation process for accounting software. Involved legal research and analysis of relevant legislative provisions to ensure all software is operating at maximum effectiveness for compliance with trust accounting requirements.
- Conducted a detailed review and update of legislative compliance checklist for use by external examiners conducting examinations of law practice's trust accounts and records for annual returns, ensuring examiners have a useful and clear interpretation of the compliance requirements as a reference when completing their reports.
- Dealing with varied trust account enquiries from the legal profession during a period of unprecedented volume of enquiries (400% increase in comparison to the same period in 2023).
- Brainstorming continuous enhancements for customer experience based on feedback and engagement with the profession.

Higher Executive Officer – The Pensions Authority

May 2023 – April 2024

- Promoted to management role with one direct report, responsible for training and development, monitoring performance, probation reviews and objective setting. Continue oversight and management of responsibilities listed below at EO level.
- Assistant Board Secretary leading all administration of regular board meetings, act as liaison with senior management for preparation of papers, monitoring and assigning action items, and minute taking.
- Conduct legal research using online legal databases and internal file of legal advice.
- Preparation of case notes on relevant topics such as discovery orders, delegated functions and trust law.
- Draft attendances of meetings with external legal services on queries or industry updates.
- Responsible for Unit financial reporting and management statistics and support to Head of Legal in unit planning.

Contact details

T: +61 4191716139 (email preferred as I am currently overseas)

E: cfinneg@tcd.ie

L: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/cfinneg/>

Education

Law LLB, Trinity College Dublin 2017

Completed all core modules, with electives in areas such as Family Law, Refugee & Immigration Law, Media Law and Medical Law & Ethics.

Achieved a **2.1 grade**.

Scoil Mhuire Ennistymon, Co. Clare, 2013

Took all subjects at Higher Level, including Applied Mathematics as an extracurricular eighth subject. Achieved a total of **535** points.

Other Achievements

- Cyber Wardens 2024 – Cyber Security training
- QFA Pensions module
- Certificate in FOI
- Pensions Authority trustee training
- Level 4 QQE Certificate in Professional Irish
- Failte Ireland Customer Service Excellence

- Actively involved in all areas of the organisation as a Change Practitioner, a grade representative at an internal group called the Internal Communication Forum, a member of the social committee and a Unit ambassador.

Executive Officer – The Pensions Authority

May 2020 – May 2023

- Key member of administrative team in the Legal Unit.
- Management of prosecution files and preparation for court dates and provision of training to new prosecuting solicitors.
- Management of procurement requirements for Unit, including running bespoke tender process for legal services contracts valued at €500K per annum.
- FOI Officer responsible for compliance with statutory requirements, coordination of all FOI requests and knowledge of FOI within the organisation. Three annual organisation wide presentations delivered.
- Support for board Secretariat including preparation of board packs.
- Regular review and maintenance of budget and unit spending, coordination of training including CPD for Unit solicitors.

Clerical Officer – The Pensions Authority

May 2019 – May 2020

- Provided a high standard of clerical and administrative support to the Legal Unit.
- Electronic filing and paper filing of all legal correspondence, advice and documents.
- Typing correspondence and legal documents including dictation.
- Preparing and issuing of summonses and correspondence in relation to prosecutions
- Preparing prosecution files in advance of court hearings.

Temporary administrative roles – Various

Sept 2018 – April 2019

- Experienced a wide range of administrative roles through temporary assignments, including key experience in legal areas such as research associate for legal recruitment boutique and receptionist in mid-sized law firm.
- Attended assignments, often on short notice, for periods varying from one day to several months.
- Developed skills such as an ability to hit the ground running in a new environment, scheduling and diary management, use of new software such as Bullhorn, switchboard systems and Sage.

Head Waitress – Hyde Bar & Gin Parlour, Galway

Sept 2017 – Sept 2018

English Teacher – English Summer S.A., Tarragona, Spain

June – August 2017

Other Experience

Mini pupillage in barrister's chambers, 3 Temple Gardens, London

Sept 2016

One week spent shadowing various barristers in a busy criminal defence chambers. Gained exposure to cases on sexual assault, probation infractions and human rights, from Magistrates Court to Court of Appeal. Attended client meetings, court appearances and assisted in preparation of briefs and documents for court.

Teacher, Street Law, Dublin

Jan - Mar 2017

Attended an intensive weekend training course run by founding members of the Street Law programme from Georgetown University. Taught a six-week course to Transition Year students in CBS James' St on topics such as 'What is a Crime?', wrongful convictions and mock trial.

Student volunteer and Rota Secretary, Niteline, Dublin

2016 -2017

Attended a ten-week training course on active listening and other skills to volunteer for the confidential student listening service. Elected as Rota Secretary in my second year and was responsible for managing the schedule and ensuring the service was covered and attending weekly business meetings for the service committee.

Appendix – Educational results

FE1 exams 2021 - 2023

Subject	Date of sitting	Grade (%)
Company Law	October 2021	56
Tort	October 2021	58
Constitutional	March 2022	54
Equity	March 2022	58
EU	October 2022	56
Contract	October 2022	65
Property	March 2023	62
Criminal	March 2023	70

Law LLB 2017

Subject	Grade	Subject	Grade
1. Junior Freshman	2.2	2. Senior Freshman	2.1
Constitutional Law I	47	Constitutional Law II	53
Tort Law	59	EU Law	56
Contract Law	44	Equity	66
Irish Legal System	60	Land Law	60
Legislation and Regulation	65	Administrative Law	61
Criminal Law	65	Private Legal Remedies	61
3. Junior Sophister	2.1	4. Senior Sophister	2.1
Child Law	67	Public Interest Law	54
Company Law	46	Food Law	62
Criminology	62	Evidence	65
Family Law	62	Refugee and Immigration Law	65
Jurisprudence	63	Media Law	69
Penology	65	Equality Law	56
Medical Law and Ethics	64		

Leaving Certificate 2013

Subject	Grade
Irish	A2
Accounting	A2
Maths	B1
Physics	B1
French	B2
English	B3
History	C2
Applied Mathematics	C3